



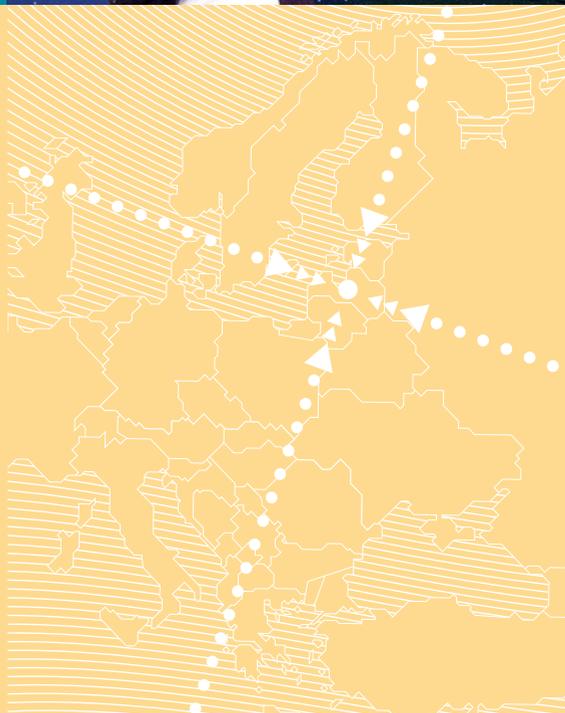
euro | guidance



Guidance System in Latvia



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1. Guidance system description

Guidance in Latvia is shared between the Education and Labour sectors. From primary through upper-secondary education both general and vocational schools provide careers education. National education standards determine that one of the main goals of education is to prepare students to make a conscious career choice. Career management skills are integrated into subject standards as learning outcomes. As of the 2012/2013 school year schools are allowed to fund the salary of a school guidance counsellor from the national education subsidy. Whether schools choose to do this depends on their budget which is linked to the number of enrolled pupils, as well as on local priorities. Higher education institutions are autonomous by law and can determine what student services they provide. The State Education Development Agency's Information and Career Guidance Department is the main institution devoted to developing recommendations and tools for improving guidance in schools, including information on education opportunities, occupational descriptions and on-line career self-assessment tests. The Department hosts the Latvian Euroguidance centre which provides information on guidance policy and practice in Europe and promotes mobility through information on learning opportunities in Europe.

In the Labour sector the State Employment Agency (SEA) through its network of regional offices provides career guidance advice and counselling free of charge to jobseekers, the employed and persons in education or planning to return to education who require information or psychological support to achieve their career goals.

There is no national legislation regulating guidance practitioners other than the occupational standard for guidance counsellors. Careers activities in the education sector are not subject to any specific inspection apart from the general inspections undertaken by the National School Inspectorate. Activities of counsellors within the SEA are governed by internal Agency regulations and are controlled by the SEA.

2. Training programmes for career counsellors

In 2007 the occupational standard for Career Counsellors was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. The standard was developed through a national project funded by the European Social Fund and formed the basis for a master's degree programme for training counsellors also developed within the framework of the project. Persons with a bachelor's degree in education or psychology or in a different field, but having at least two years of relevant work experience are eligible to enrol in the programme.

The programme provides the skills, knowledge, professional values and personal awareness required to serve young people, adults and people with disabilities and learning difficulties in a wide range of work settings: education institutions, employment agencies, guidance centres and companies, as well as to pursue research. The programme's modules: Career theories, Social environment and labour market, Methodology of professional activities and Research each include theory and practice in counselling methods. The entire programme requires completion of 120 ECTS points. Full-time studies take two years; parttime studies take two-and-a-half years. Graduates are awarded a degree of Master in Education and the professional qualification of Guidance Counsellor. Some universities offer an additional qualification of Youth Worker.

3. Methodologies for providing guidance and counselling

Careers education at schools is integrated into subject lessons and class lessons and can be a topic for project week activities and field trips. Teachers can freely organize their lessons and choose methods as long as curriculum objectives are achieved. Careers education has been developed with the support of the 2005-2008 ESF National project KIPNIS which provided development and delivery of teacher in-service training. Teacher handbooks and student workbooks ensuring systematic and sequential classroom activities from 7th - 12th form for general and vocational schools, DVD's illustrating professions in the most important economic sectors, informative catalogues of education opportunities following 9th and 12th form as well as the National Database on Learning Opportunities which includes online career inventories and an enquiry service were also developed within the scope of the KIPNIS project. Since the close of the project, new methods and materials as well as teacher training on a smaller scale have been provided by Euroguidance Latvia. The National Database on Learning Opportunities has continued to develop, offering a wider range of learning opportunities and new information services. Higher education institutions may provide career guidance at student information centres. Activities generally include job fairs, CV writing workshops, information seminars, careers tests and individual counselling. Several universities have developed on-line career tools.

Unemployed persons and job-seekers registered with the State Employment Agency (SEA) can choose group or individual career and/or psychological counselling, career guidance, identification of suitable employment goals, job search information and assistance, retraining and work trials. Individuals are offered interest, aptitude, personality and psychometric testing, health profiling, role play, coaching and information provision. Group activities involve consultations, seminars and lectures on career management issues, career motivation tests and interpersonal communication training. SEA internet services include online career interest tests, information on careers and training opportunities, storage of CV and motivation letters, as well as responses to user questions by career guidance and/or psychological counsellors. The Career Development Support Unit of the SEA develops methodology - prepares information resources, tests, questionnaires, inventories and other methodological materials for the SEA career counsellors.

4. Methodologies for assessment of skills

Career counsellors of the SEA provide assessment of skills via individual and group diagnostic career counselling sessions before inclusion of clients in active employment measures, for example, enrolment in training programs. Individual and group diagnostic career consultations provided by career counsellors of the SEA include professional aptitude, capability and motivation assessment. The counsellors of the SEA assess client professional interests and competences against specific occupational profiles and evaluate personal characteristics, cognitive styles, aptitude for work and individual psychophysiological characteristics compared to job requirements. The SEA provides their career counsellors with questionnaires, inventories and checklists to assess skills.



5. Guidance forum

The national guidance forum in Latvia is called “Karjeras attīstības atbalsta sistēmas sadarbības padome” or “Cooperation Council for the Career Guidance System”. Members include representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science, National Centre for Curriculum Development, National Service for Quality in Education, State Education Development Agency, Ministry of Welfare, State Employment Service, Social Integration State Agency, Ministry of Economics, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Latvian Career Development Support Association, Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia, Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, Latvian Employers Confederation and Latvian Adult Education Association. The council has met at least twice yearly since 2007 to discuss priorities in guidance. The State Education Development Agency’s Information and Career Guidance Department has been nominated as the secretariat for this Forum. The secretariat convenes the Forum meetings when development processes in the guidance system require input from decision-makers. The forum has an advisory role and its decisions are not binding.

6. Funding

There is no funding earmarked specifically for guidance within the subsidies that the Ministry of Education and Science pays to general and vocational schools or higher education institutions. It is up to the institutions to prioritize what type of support staff they will employ within their salary budget. In order to support guidance in the education sector, an ESF national project was implemented in 2005-2008 for 2.27 million EUR to develop and deliver in-service training courses and materials for teachers providing careers education, careers information tools for use in schools and a training programme at master’s level for career guidance counsellors. The second phase of the project was postponed due to the effects of the economic crisis. The national education budget supports the National Database of Learning Opportunities and partially funds other methodological development activities of the State Education Development Agency’s Information and Career Guidance Department, including the activities of the Euroguidance programme. The Ministry of Welfare funds the activities of the State Employment Agency (SEA). The SEA oversees and provides information and methodological support to career guidance counsellors and psychologists who serve unemployed persons and job seekers at the SEA branch offices in 28 cities.

7. Useful contacts and relevant internet links

State Employment Agency Career Development Support Unit
K.Valdemara iela 38 k-1, Rīga, LV - 1010
nva@nva.lv • www.karjerascentrs.lv

State Education Development Agency Information and Career Guidance Department
Valņņu iela 3, 6th floor, Rīga, LV-1050
info@viaa.gov.lv • www.viaa.gov.lv/Euroguidance

National Database of Learning Opportunities
Valņņu iela 3, 6th floor, Rīga, LV-1050
info@niid.lv • www.niid.lv

Professional orientation until 2006
directs people to fill the vacancies in the labour market

Career Guidance and Counselling System after March 2006
enables citizens to identify their capacities, competences and interests to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life path in learning, work and other settings

Paradigm

Ministry of Education and Science
Ministry of Welfare

National Guidance Forum

Policy

Information and vocational guidance providers, counsellors

Trainers of guidance counsellors

Personnel

Information
Careers counselling
Careers education

Services

State Employment Agency

Educational institutions

Providers

State Employment Agency

State Education Development Agency/Euroguidance

Support